

Super Segment
Jung Sungyoon

19 July – 24 August, 2024

Whistle is pleased to announce Jung Sungyoon's solo exhibition, *Super Segment*, on view from July 19 to August 24. In the present era, in which the domains that can be automated by machines are gradually expanding and intertwining, Jung Sungyoon explores the internal and external movements of machinery from a sculptural perspective. Jung's sculptural installations visualize cyclical systems and paths through physical movement or mimic specific movements using optical illusions. The six installation works in this exhibition depict the tension, order, compression, expansion, accumulation, and diminution that emerge in the process of energy's transformation into form.

Strength Beyond Strength
Stone Park

I once went on a trip with Sungyoon to stay at a house near the beach, to visit the Gwangju Biennale. During the day, we had coffee, and at night, we drank, sharing stories about life. Suddenly, I remembered we could use the audio system in our accommodation. I knew Sungyoon normally doesn't listen to music in daily life. I decided to listen to music at full volume for the first time in a while, since we were in a secluded place. While searching for music, I recalled that Sungyoon had once been into Pantera. Since Pantera was always on my playlist growing up, I thought it would be a perfect choice. The first track, *Strength Beyond Strength*, started playing on the audio system.

Pantera, which means 'panther,' is a band from the Southern States, and their sound leaves a distinctive impression. Rex pursues the cranked-up bass sound of a tube amp, Dimebag plays with stacks of Randall amps set to an extreme V-shape EQ, Vinnie maximizes impact holding his drumsticks backwards, and the vocalist Philip has distortion even within his voice. The band proves why the genre is called metal with their violent and groovy sound.

It's impossible not to headbang to their music. As I was enthusiastically headbanging to the loudly blaring sound, I looked ahead. Sungyoon was quietly gazing into the void, unmoving. It was disconcerting to see such a calm appreciation in the presence of music

he once loved. While three albums played in succession, Sungyoon's demeanor was neither bored nor indifferent. It was more about realizing how far he had come from those times upon hearing the music he once loved.

In Sungyoon's studio, there's an autographed drumhead thrown by the drummer during Pantera's concert in Korea. Thinking back to Sungyoon's unreadable face that day, it was hard to imagine him squeezing through the rows of college students and American soldiers standing in the front, to finally receive the drumhead. The metal kid who used to play the guitar, now sits in front of me as a mentor.

Love Letter (2024) seems to be a title that Sungyoon has cherished for a long time. Sharing the same title as his earliest work, *Love Letter* (2001), it features two metal pillars in a rotating form. Their rotational movement is in close contact, while maintaining a slight distance. The metal surfaces become each other's halves, forming a hollow circle. The rotating pillars continuously create an empty perimeter. It has been said that steady movement does not trigger our sensory reception. I suppose the ability to detect the orbital speed of 30km/s had no use for human survival. Yet, the artist chooses the most steady movements. They achieve something worth observing for a long time in the simplest manner. Celestial bodies in rotation always take on a spherical shape. It seems that the force operating between relationships causes their boundaries to shift along their curved edges.

Sungyoon often talked of celestial bodies. It is practically his last remaining passion. The laws of an empty infinity and an endlessly expanding universe hold both fascination and fear. The repeated creation and destruction of the meaningless spaces within the universe reveals its absolute isolation. This introspective process can be found in three of his pieces. *Heavy Dots* (2024) and *Milky Way* (2024) present themselves as individual points, continuous lines, overlapping surfaces, and repetitions. The connected layers extend from the sharp center to the soft outer curves. The stacked masses press against each other, expanding. The viewer encounters the phenomena of disturbance and collapse within these two isolated systems, inspired by the motifs of stadiums and galaxies. The scale of *Modified Point* (2024) was constructed to fit the exhibition space. A printed image is attached to a rotating plate in the center of the front right window frame. The image revolving around a central axis casts shadows that evokes three-dimensionality, but the rotational movement reveals its thin cross-section. The vertical axis rotating on both the



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inside and the outside of the plate continuously modifies the viewer's fixed perspective. This moment, where critical points and boundaries are simultaneously established and blurred, represents the portraits of statics collected by someone who has observed the world.

VLS (Very Large Spring) (2024) is a sculpture that has been liberated from the constraints of the floor and the gravity. It embodies the form of a spring, inspired by Sungyoon's long-standing interest in snakes. The Spring, capable of recovering its original shape, and the Snake, streamlined for propulsion by unifying its entire body into a single component, is suspended in the air. This object—a spring storing mechanical energy and a snake carrying dangerous force—radiates an aura of mystique. This object radiates an aura of mystique, like the spring containing mechanical energy and the snake possessing lethal force. They are manifestations of life forms captured and released into the world by an artist who has delved deep into the dark abyss of machinery. *Self-discipline (2024)* takes the form of multiple wheels arranged in a matrix. These aligned wheels silently traverse forward and backward due to their sharp edges, achieving maximum control with minimal friction. This arrangement eliminates the distinctions between front and back and enables seamless motion within the organized silence.

The works, starkly simplified to the point of being clinical, are stripped of the possibility of being read autobiographically or through a singular perspective. Instead, they are rich with allusions to the artist's experiences, providing viewers with substantial information. The cold process of reverse engineering the mechanical mechanisms further simplifies and strengthens Sungyoon's investigations. These objects, imbued with strength, contain only truth and are devoid of fiction. Moving beyond the era of manipulating force to design movement, Sungyoon explores the understanding of force through dismantling, captured in material form.

Sungyoon's earliest work and the equally old metal album is what seems to have inspired me to write about him. Both *Love Letter (2001)* and the music of that era evoke a sense of emptiness. At the edge of this emptiness lies the mysteries of the world. Finding a balance

between the order and chaos that operates around the emptiness requires significant strength. "Super" might have been an accurate word for the poise and grandeur necessary for such integration. To measure the embodied resilience and enduring energy of time, the process had to be divided into six distinct forms. As a viewer, I believe I will continue to ponder the meanings Sungyoon sought to convey and what lies beyond them within these segments

Jung Sungyoon (b. 1973) illustrates the cyclical paths of desires and beliefs through forms that occur in machinery. The artist explores (non-)functional mechanical systems in order to transform movements into structures. Selected exhibitions include *Taste of Grapes (2021)* at Perigee Gallery, *Eclipse (2014)* as part of the SeMA Emerging Artists Support Program at the Seoul Museum of Art, and *Minor Threat (2016)* at the Kim Chong Yung Museum. Jung participated in the residency program at Goyang Studio (National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art) in 2017 and at the Nanji Residency (Seoul Museum of Art) from 2012 to 2013.

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